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THOUGHTS

ON THE LATE

NEGOTIATION AT PARIS.

1609/1954

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NEGOTIATION AT PARIS;

THE

CAUSES OF ITS FAILURE;

THE

PRINCIPLES ON WHICH IT OUGHT TO HAVE BEEN CONDUCTED;

AND THE

MEANS OF ITS RENEWAL.

LONDON:

Printed for J. DEBRETT, oppoſite Burlington Houſe, Piccadilly.

1797.

THOUGHTS

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&c. &c.

WHEN the Parliament, which was convoked in the month of October laſt, met for the diſpatch of public buſineſs, it gave riſe to the moſt pleaſing expectations among every order of men. The unanimity, diſplayed on the firſt day of the preſent ſeſſion, ſeemed to juſtify the flattering anticipation of returning tranquillity. By the unequivocal recognition of the French Government and Conſtitution, the great impediment to peace had been removed and done away. The nomination of an Embaſſador, ſent to negotiate in the capital of the enemy, with the immediate agents of the executive authority in that country, appeared to be an inconteſtable proof of ſincerity on our part. It went further, and indicated a zealous deſire to bring the war to a prompt termination. Truſting to theſe appearances of harmony at home, and to the demonſtrations of a pacific diſpoſition in the Britiſh Cabinet, men in general ventured to conſider the concluſion of a juſt and honorable peace, founded on principles of general juſtice, as an event apparently neither very diſtant, nor very improbable.

In theſe conjectures, and in theſe expectations, the nation has, however, been egregiouſly and fatally miſtaken. However ſolid may have appeared the grounds or facts upon which we reaſoned, our concluſions have not proved the leſs erroneous. The negotiation from which ſuch beneficial effects to Europe and to mankind might have reſulted, has been abruptly and finally broken off. No attempt to renew it on either ſide, to explain ſatisfactorily the cauſes of rupture, or to heal the breach, has been hitherto made. The momentary unanimity, manifeſted in the Houſe of Commons upon the addreſs to the Throne, has given place to mutual reproach, accuſation, and aſperity. The two countries, and the two parties, after their ſhort and diſſembled approaches towards each other, have reſumed their hoſtile attitudes. Every hope or proſpect of immediate peace has vaniſhed; and the viſion to which we have ſo fondly looked, is ſucceeded by the melancholy, but neceſſary preparations for a fifth campaign.

Nor does this diſappointment on one hand, and the neceſſity of proſecuting the war on the other, form the whole extent of the preſent calamity. The events by ſea and land, foreign and domeſtic, which have taken place ſince the diſmiſſion of Lord Malmſbury from Paris, are by no means calculated to augment the hopes of the allies, or to check the ſpirit of enterprize in the enemy. The death of Catherine the Second, at the moment when ſhe appeared to be ready to ſign a ſubſidiary treaty with Great Britain, and to enter actively on the ſcene, has given a new aſpect to the political ſky of the North. We are yet to learn what part her ſucceſſor, the new Emperor, may take in the great conteſt which agitates Europe. The total evacuation of Corſica and of the Mediterranean by the Engliſh, has left all the commerce of the Levant in the hands of France; nor can we be ſurprized, if the Italian powers and ſtates, who have been hitherto amicable or neutral, deſtitute of protection or ſupport, haſten to deprecate the reſentment of the Directory. The recent advices from the army of Al-

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vinzy, followed by the ſurrender of Mantua, leave it doubtful whether even the preſence of the Arch Duke Charles himſelf, can retrieve the affairs of the Houſe of Auſtria in Lombardy.

If from this picture of affairs abroad, we turn our view to the proſpect at home, it is not more exhilarating. To whatever cauſe we may attribute the late delay in ſending out the fleet; whether we fix it on the Firſt Lord of the Board of Admiralty, or on any of the inferior officers, is a queſtion of little moment. The fleet of France which might have been captured or deſtroyed, has returned ſafe to Breſt. Emboldened by their eſcape, and by the negative ſucceſs of their expedition, they only wait for an occaſion to renew it under more favorable auſpices: while Europe, accuſtomed to expect from the Engliſh navy, the moſt rapid and vigilant exertions, regards our inactivity with aſtoniſhment and contempt.

Meanwhile the ſtorm gathers along the ſhore of Belgium. From Dunkirk to the mouth of the Maeſe and the Texel, all is preparation. The Directory wait only for the ſetting in of the eaſterly winds, to waft over their legions and their manifeſtos to the coaſt of England. Already troops aſſemble; and anarchy, veiled under the maſk of liberty and equality, is ready to fraternize with the inferior orders, or to convoke the primary aſſemblies.

In ſuch circumſtances, and at ſuch a time, it is natural for every man who reflects, to aſk, how, and from what cauſes proceeded the late rupture of the negotiation at Paris? Was it, as the Directory attempt to prove, and loudly aſſert, the neceſſary conſequence of our inſincerity, or arrogance, or unreaſonable and unjuſt demands? Or may we conclude with the miniſterial adherents, that it is to be attributed to the ſyſtematical averſion and apprehenſion of peace, in the governing party of the French Republic? Has the oppoſition in this country manifeſted

throughout their public conduct, a ſincere and diſintereſted deſire of peace? Or may they not rather be accuſed of ſacrificing every patriotic conſideration, to the ejection of miniſters? Finally, are there no means left, by which the negotiation ſo recently and abruptly broken off, may be renewed? Might not a temperate and cool reconſideration of the propoſitions tendered by Lord Malmſbury, and rejected by de la Croix, tend to ſo ſalutary a purpoſe? Would it not be poſſible for Parliament, without violation or diminution of its dignity, to adopt ſome reſolutions, which, while they ſtrengthened the Executive Government, might be conciliatory in their nature, and pacific in their effect? Theſe are, perhaps, of all the queſtions that can be preſented to the human mind, thoſe in the agitation and diſcuſſion of which we are at this moment moſt deeply intereſted. Let us endeavour to examine them with temper and impartiality, however little ſuch qualities may recommend to attention, when men of almoſt every deſcription are more or leſs inflamed with the ſpirit of party.

In order to diſcuſs with intelligence and profit any propoſition, it is indiſpenſable in the outſet to define with accuracy the meaning of the terms reciprocally adopted. Above all, it is neceſſary, on the preſent occaſion, to diſcriminate between the *Government* or *Conſtitution* of a country, which *never can be* at war with that of any other country; and the actual poſſeſſors of political power or office, denominated *Miniſters*. Theſe latter, and theſe only, *can be* at war with the Adminiſtration of another ſtate. It is only by never loſing ſight of this fundamental axiom, that we can bring home the accuſation of commencing and perpetuating an unjuſt or ruinous war, to its real authors. Let us try to illuſtrate the aſſertion, by diſſecting, and familiarizing it to our view. The more minutely it is examined, the more clearly it will be demonſtrated.

If we were to try to imagine a ſoleciſm in language and in ideas, it would be that of ſuppoſing two *countries* to be

really at war. The peaſants, on both ſides of the Britiſh channel, would laugh, if they were told that the cliffs of Dover and of Calais, radically the ſame at their baſe, were inſpired with enmity towards each other. Even the dulleſt citizen of London muſt ſmile, if it was attempted to be proved to him, that the Thames and the Seine were inflamed with mutual rancour; or that "Notre Dame," and St. Paul's had a religious quarrel. As abſurd and as unjuſt, though not perhaps as obviouſly ridiculous, is it to aſſert that the *inhabitants* of England and of France are, or can be individually and perſonally in hoſtility to each other. Of more than thirty-ſix millions of people, at which we may eſtimate the aggregate population of the two countries, only a ſmall proportion, perhaps a few thouſands, have ever come into actual contact. The great maſſes of population, occupying the reſpective ſoils of the Monarchy or the Republic, are equally precluded by their poſition, and by other circumſtances, from having perſonal grounds of reciprocal hoſtility.

Politicians who aſpire to ſuperior ſagacity, do not perceive the equal abſurdity of maintaining, that the peculiar form or modulation of law and Conſtitution under which an independant nation lives, (which is in fact its Government,) can be at war with the form of law and Conſtitution under which another independant nation exiſts. The period is even rapidly approaching, in the commercial, political, and civilized world, when it will be univerſally admitted and underſtood, that the ſolid and permanent intereſts of independant nations can no more be at war, or in oppoſition to each other, than their reſpective governments, or territories. It is, nevertheleſs, true, that by an abuſe of terms to which we become familiar, we continually allow the great conſtitutional machine of our political order to be miſtaken for, or to be confounded with, its agents, the miniſterial party, who only ſhift the ſcenes, and aſſume the management of the drama. Miniſters gladly avail themſelves of this deception, denominate themſelves *the Govern-*

ment, and accuſe their opponents as the enemies of *the Country*. In like manner, the minority or oppoſition attack the ſacred machine of *Government*, which ought to be inviolate and exempt from blame or imputation; inſtead of the *Miniſters* who move it, and who alone are capable of error.

Who, then, in the preſent inſtance, it may be aſked, have made, and continue to carry on the war? Certainly not the two *nations*. The general, and anxious wiſh of both for peace, is a fact of the moſt extenſive notoriety. That neither of them, as a people, demanded or deſired war, is equally well known, and univerſally admitted. An unequivocal teſtimony to the truth of this fact, is found in the anxiety of both Adminiſtrations to make a merit with their reſpective countries, by an affected eagerneſs for peace. With equal induſtry they endeavour to ſhift from themſelves, and to throw on each other reciprocally, the odium of continuing the war. But, the ſtrongeſt, though evidently an involuntary proof, how much that continuance, which the two *nations* equally deplore, is attributable ſolely and excluſively to their *Miniſters*, has come out in the courſe of the late negotiation at Paris. If we read the correſpondence between the Embaſſador of Great Britain and the Delegate of the Directory, we ſhall there diſcover it, though artfully veiled and concealed under mutual profeſſions, and diplomatic jargon. We find, in fact, that, notwithſtanding thoſe aſſertions, the moſt guarded precautions were practiſed by both *Adminiſtrations*, not to cede or yield any portion of territory, upon which peace could be eſtabliſhed between the two *countries*.

It is, then, inconteſtable, and palpable beyond denial or evaſion, that the two *Miniſtries*, and *they only*, *are at war*. It is equally evident that they alone are accountable for, and chargeable with the failure of the late negotiation. In aſcertaining the cauſes that produced its failure, it becomes neceſſary for the public ſafety, to bring home the charge,

however invidious, to the *Adminiſtration* of either the *one*, or *the other* of the two ſtates. Perhaps, if candidly examined, it may not a little attach to mixed circumſtances in the poſition of *both*. Juſtice and impartiality require that the motives of their conduct ſhould be neither impeached, nor ſuſpected. Thoſe by which the Britiſh Miniſtry were influenced, we know to be honorable and patriotic. For many and obvious reaſons, they cannot be otherwiſe; though their views and conceptions of the national intereſt, may be injudicious or erroneous.

But, even admitting in its utmoſt extent, the criminality or error of the reſpective *Adminiſtrations*; is the party ſtyling itſelf the *Oppoſition* in the two countries, entitled to more reſpect? Let us anſwer this enquiry by an appeal to facts. It is the only becoming, or ſatisfactory reply. If the anti-miniſterial parties in the countries at war, are the real advocates of peace: if they attack and accuſe their antagoniſts, only with a view to produce it, and not to obtain the power of conducting the war themſelves; then, and in that caſe, they have the moſt legitimate claims on the gratitude of the people upon both ſides. But if, on the contrary, they become reciprocally the defenders of the warlike miniſterial parties in the country of their enemies, in order by contraſt to ſhew the miſconduct of the adminiſtration of their own country, they are then only negative friends to peace, and very ſuſpicious patriots. I deſire not to decide on the point. They ſtand in the judgment of their countrymen, whoſe deciſion is final, and who alone are competent to acquit, or to condemn.

Unfortunately for France and England, the war, under ſuch inauſpicious circumſtances, is likely to continue long, as well as to be bloody and acrimonious. It aſſumes an air of myſtery, while it operates effectually to the purpoſes of deſtructive oppreſſion. In ſuch a ſtate of parties, no power poſſeſſes influence or force to eſpouſe the cauſe of peace. The maſs of the two nations, and, indeed, of all

the Belligerent States, cannot act to its attainment. Individuals, of whatever deſcription, who would plead for it, are expoſed to the odium of being branded as enemies to the juſt ſpirit and reſentment of their country, as well as of its lawful indemnifications by conqueſt. They are, therefore, ſilent, or overborne, and the war continues.

In all former wars, it muſt be admitted that theſe circumſtances had their influence, as in the preſent; but, there was a powerful counteraction againſt their effect. The want or extinction of pecuniary reſources compelled the Miniſters of the moſt exhauſted country, to keep peace, with certain ſubmiſſions, as a certainty always in reſerve. The preſent hoſtilities commenced under very different auſpices. The war was that of the rulers of the French Government, when their tone was inſolent. Liberated from all ſubmiſſion to antient forms or authorities at home, reſtrained by no conſiderations or compacts of preceding time; their armies abroad were maſters of Flanders, and anticipated as certain the conqueſt of Holland.

At the ſame time, the neceſſities of the war created a money, of which the neighbouring States and Adminiſtrations neither underſtood the force, nor diſcovered the counter check. This new coinage, introduced by fraud into circulation, produced univerſal confuſion; while the war, conducted by France upon principles not leſs new, than they were full of energy, ſhook to their center all the political eſtabliſhments of Europe. It repelled, and conquered, as it raged. It changed ſucceſſively the Miniſters who had the management of it at Paris, without relaxing to a pacification on the part of its authors. It finally converted enemies and opponents to allies. Great Britain alone, aided by the gallant activity and good faith of Auſtria, the ſteady zeal of Portugal, and we may add, the dignity of Papal firmneſs, has ſtill to oppoſe its career, till it either attracts, or forces peace.

Under the weight of theſe alarming facts and conſiderations, we recur to the only important object of enquiry; How has the failure of the late negotiation been produced? And, to which of the two Adminiſtrations is that failure to be wholly or principally attributed? the queſtion has been already agitated and diſcuſſed in both Houſes of Parliament, without any other effect than that of producing completely oppoſite conviction in the reſpective adherents of the Miniſter and the Minority. It muſt ſtrike the moſt careleſs or ſuperficial obſerver, that not one of the perſons who roſe to ſpeak their ſentiments reſpecting it, examined the conduct of the Britiſh negotiator by its only proper teſts. I mean, the *ſpirit* of His Majeſty's moſt benign and gracious ſpeech, when he announced the miſſion; and the *principle* on which Parliament was unanimous in its approbation. A circumſtance ſtill more curious, occurred. It was, that in ſolemn deliberation upon the official intercourſe of the repreſentative agents of the two great nations at war, a paper was admitted as evidence, which contained merely an ex parte report of the private converſation of thoſe agents. It is, perhaps, the firſt time, that the vague recollections of any man have ever been conſidered as a document of ſtate, fit for the grave conſideration of a legiſlative aſſembly. Every word of Lord Malmſbury's long diſpatch to Lord Grenville, No. 30, dated "Paris, 20th "December," is only an appeal to memory, and might have been either denied or explained away by de la Croix.

As far as the opinions of the French Adminiſtration, relative to their ſenſe of the iſſue of the late negotiation, have been expreſſed, they mark the moſt complete approbation of their own conduct in rejecting the propoſitions held out to them. Nor have the opponents of the Directory on the other ſide of the Channel, been leſs violent than the minority here, in reprobating the tone and reſolution of their political antagoniſts.

If we examine the ſyſtem and intentions of the two Adminiſtrations by the beſt of all criterions, the internal evidence contained in the papers publiſhed, we ſhall perhaps diſcover ſome ground for the mutual accuſations of *inſincerity*, and *diſinclination to peace*, ſo loudly, as well as indignantly, repeated on both ſides. Let us trace the outline of the overtures, from thoſe of Mr. Wickham, down to Lord Malmſbury. The looſeſt inſpection of them will prove, how warm on both ſides were the profeſſions, but how cold the real diſpoſition of both parties, to terminate the war. In his note to Mr. Barthelemy of the "8th March, 1796," the Engliſh Miniſter, Mr. Wickham, affects to ſound the inclination of the French Government towards peace. But, as if he was apprehenſive leſt they ſhould catch at ſuch a propoſal, however indirect, he takes care to add, "that he is not authorized to enter into negotiation."

What effect could an application ſo guarded and ſo cautious, to ſay no more of it, produce? Only to augment ſuſpicion in the enemy. It did ſo. The Directory replied, on the "26th March," through Mr. Barthelemy, with many florid proteſtations of their anxiety for peace, if the want of powers to negotiate it on the part of Mr. Wickham, did not lead them to queſtion the *ſincerity* of his employers. But, they took effectual care to interpoſe as inſurmountable a bar on their part to its completion, as the Engliſh Miniſtry had done before. They announce in very clear and intelligible terms, that they "can and will conſent to no alienation of the exiſting territory of the Republic." In other words, "we will not relinquiſh Belgium."

The two negotiating parties having thus profeſſed peace, but ſecured war, ſilence enſues during five months. Germany is over-run, and as rapidly recovered. Early in September, however, Lord Grenville firſt recovers his ſpeech. Through the medium of the Daniſh Envoy at

the Britiſh Court, he renews the pretended ſolicitation for peace, and demands a paſſport "for a perſon of confidence whom His Majeſty will ſend to Paris, to diſcuſs the moſt proper means for ſo deſirable an end." This demand carried with it a ſerious face. Nevertheleſs, the Directory, in a verbal reply, neither reſpectfully worded, nor reſpectfully communicated, barely conſent for once, and that not to be conſidered as a precedent in future, that paſſports might be granted to a perſon properly authorized by England.

Theſe affronts were, however, no longer conſidered as ſolid impediments to negotiation. Lord Grenville condeſcends to aſk of the Executive Directory, in a formal letter of the "27th of September," the paſſports in queſtion. De la Croix, Miniſter for Foreign Affairs, now firſt appears on the ſcene, and forwards the paſſports. He accompanies them with thoſe forms and expreſſions of urbanity and good breeding, uſed under the antient order of things, between the Miniſters of hoſtile nations, in their official intercourſe. But, the *decree* which he tranſmits, is not the leſs republican, or unpalatable. It demands that the Envoy of *England*, not of His *Britannic Majeſty*, "ſhall have full powers to conclude definitively, as well as to negociate peace." The Directory had not forgotten the queſtions put to *France*, in Mr. Wickham's note; and they thought proper to pay us in our own coin.

At length, after a labour of ſeveral weeks, the political mountain opens, and Lord Malmſbury is produced. An accompliſhed Stateſman; though not old, yet become grey in the ſervice of his country! It is not my intention to follow him through the ſinuoſities and windings of his political intercourſe, from the firſt ſuccinct note of the 22d of October, in which he announces his arrival at Paris to de la Croix, down to that diffuſe and laborious diſpatch of painful reminiſcence, which cloſed his embaſſy; and which, I believe, ſtands alone in the annals of the "Corps Diplo-

matique." On perusing it, one is tempted to imagine that it was composed in emulation of a celebrated French performance, denominated "Les *Souvenirs* de Caylus."

The whole correspondence between Lord Malmsbury and de la Croix, is, in fact, so recent, and its catastrophe is so deeply imprinted on the public mind, that it is unnecessary to recal the minute circumstances of it to their attention. With the clue which has been already given, that diplomatic labyrinth becomes accessible and pervious. It is evident that neither power, though professing to desire equally peace, would admit the errors in which the contest began, nor acknowledge the necessity of closing it. Nor would they consent to make those political, commercial, and territorial renunciations or cessions, on which alone a pacification could be founded. If we acquit the English Administration of *insincerity* on this occasion, let us not be too severe on the supposed *ambition* of the Directory. Unhappily, we must admit, that if it had been studiously premeditated and concerted by the parties negotiating, to afford each other the most indispensable necessity for continuing the war, the arrangement could not have been more dextrously conceived, nor more completely executed. Peace is now removed to an incalculable distance.

To the advocates for it in France, may not the Executive Directory say, with plausibility, if not with some degree of justice: "We considered the British Administration as insincere from the first moment, and we so declared in our reply to the insidious questions originally put by Mr. Wickham. We rejected all intermediate negotiation as unbecoming, and only calculated for purposes of deception or delay. When we finally consented to receive an Embassador from England, it was upon condition that he should be furnished with full powers and instructions, not merely to negotiate, but, to conclude peace. And what has been the result? After nearly two months of continual application to that Minister, in order to ascertain the ulti-

mate terms upon which the Britiſh Miniſtry would agree to terminate the war, behold the ſtipulations reluctantly extorted from him. They are,

Firſt,

The reſtitution of almoſt all our conqueſts in Italy, Germany, and Belgium: conſequently, the violation and renunciation of every treaty or arrangement made with thoſe countries.

Secondly,

Propoſitions relative to Spain and Holland, of a nature which could not fail to infringe our political engagements with thoſe States.

Laſtly,

The eventual poſſeſſion of the Cape of Good Hope and Ceylon confirmed to the Engliſh Crown, together with ſome indefinite and unaſcertained compenſation for the Spaniſh part of St. Domingo.

Can theſe demands be read without indignation? Is there a Frenchman that loves his country, who would ſubſcribe to them?"

On the other hand, the Engliſh Miniſtry may plead, with perhaps equal truth and reaſon; that "waving every difficulty or diſcuſſion relative to the origin of the war, as well as the nature of the authorities with which they were to treat, they were ſo deſirous of reſtoring peace, not only to their own country, but to all the nations engaged in hoſtilities, that they made the firſt advances to negotiation. That they perſiſted in thoſe advances, amidſt the indignities and inſults of the enemy. That they ſent an embaſſador to Paris, who uſed every addreſs to induce the Directory either to propoſe their own terms: or, to enter into amicable deliberation on thoſe conditions, which it was thought prudent on the part of His Britannic Majeſty to bring forward in the firſt inſtance. That the anſwer was,

a diſgraceful command to quit the French territory. Finally, that it was palpable, the Directory only permitted Lord Malmſbury to remain at Paris, until the invaſion of Ireland, which they were arranging during the negotiation, was ready to proceed upon its deſtination." To ſuch an appeal it ſeems difficult to refuſe conſent and approbation.

Amidſt theſe reciprocal ſtatements of the late tranſactions, which though contradictory, are yet perhaps compatible, the two Adminiſtrations are occupied in rouſing and exciting the ancient, hereditary animoſity of their reſpective nations. But, the days of chivalry are paſt. Mutual exhauſture and poverty diſarm the fierceſt reſentment. Peace is the ardent and general deſire of the great majority of the people, on both ſides of the channel. Among that majority, other views predominate, beſides an attachment to the objects of oſtenſible miniſterial conteſt. Theſe views embrace ideas of national greatneſs and felicity, very different from ſuch as are acquired, or ſecured by conqueſt.

Hence it ariſes, that, contrary to the former pulſe of Britiſh prejudice, the Adminiſtration has to encounter here at home, within the iſland itſelf, the ſevereſt critics upon their demands in the late negotiation. While, on the other hand, the people of France are ready to remonſtrate againſt the haughty conduct of their rulers towards an Embaſſador, who came from a great and a free nation, to ſolicit peace. If it were not for theſe amicable diſpoſitions among the great maſs of the inhabitants of the two countries, it muſt be confeſſed that the predicament in which *both* are left by the event of the late negotiation, is the moſt ſerious and awful that could have occurred.

It would be not leſs impolitic than unjuſt, to attribute the conſequences of that predicament, however calamitous they may prove, to any improper, or diſhonourable intentions in the Miniſters of either ſtate. But, while we acquit our own Adminiſtration, let us have ſufficient mag-

nanimity to admit that the motives which actuate the enemy, may originate in genuine love of their country.

The poſition in which the Engliſh Miniſtry has been placed ever ſince the commencement of the preſent war, has been new in polities, and full of difficulties. All the civilized ſtates of the great European Republic, are in fact involved in embarraſſments of a ſingular nature, and peculiar to the times in which we live. Thoſe tyes of order, of religion, of morality, and of habitual reverence for local inſtitutions, which formerly inſpired reſpect or awe, are inſenſibly diſſolving, and loſing their ſocial force. They give way to more ſelfiſh conſiderations. While our politicians and legiſlators neglect to avail themſelves of the tyes of private intereſt, as connected with the public and general welfare or preſervation, in order to ſtrengthen the bands of ſociety and the harmony of nations.

If we conſider the vaſt and unaſcertained reſources of an enemy ſuch as France, with which we have been contending for four years, and with which we are ſtill at iſſue for our very exiſtence; if we reflect on the ſacrifices to which the enemy has devoted itſelf, we muſt confeſs that it is no little merit to have hitherto ſuſtained our interior tranquillity, public credit, and naval ſuperiority. Nor ought we to forget that a ſteady alliance has been maintained with an honorable continental ally, and that our natural connection with America has been preſerved, in ſpite of every effort to diſunite the intereſts of the two countries. Theſe merits, even in the opinion of their enemies, unqueſtionably are due to the Adminiſtration. The Miniſter, aſſailed continually by ſuch powerful eloquence in the Houſe of Commons, muſt leave much to his aſſociates in office. Of theſe, the ſpirit of party neither leaves a free, nor a fortunate choice. In the department of foreign affairs, more conciliating abilities might have co-operated to ſave his adminiſtration from the complaints and defection of allies, and the heavy demands of neutral ſtates. In

our great tranſmarine concerns, an all-graſping ambition ſeems to have preſided.

The greateſt monument of our Miniſter's political fame, is the act for the eventual ſecurity of public credit in the progreſſive diſcharge of the national debt; better known by the denomination of the ſinking fund. An act which has been hitherto inviolate, and which certainly renders its author an object of general gratitude, as well as applauſe. It may be juſtly conſidered as the Palladium of our liberties and conſtitution during the age in which we live. Its beneficial effects are even felt throughout Europe. That Palladium can only be loſt and ſwallowed up by the continuance of the war.

Beſides the obvious impediments to pacification on the part of a powerful and victorious enemy, there are, unfortunately, it muſt be admitted, many domeſtic conſiderations which weigh with men of reflexion, againſt a precipitate peace. However chimerical or unjuſt ſuch conſiderations may be, they do not the leſs impede that ſalutary work. Nor, when we talk of Adminiſtration, muſt we limit the idea to a certain deſcription of men in office. We muſt extend the meaning of the term to thoſe perſons in both Houſes of Parliament, who are advocates for the war. Many among them entertain religious and political fears relative to the contagion of French principles or tenets, after a peace. They are ſo blinded by prejudice or by animoſity, as not to perceive that anarchy is the only real and formidable enemy with whom we have to combat. They do not, or will not ſee, that the Directory of France are at this moment arming againſt the ſame adverſary. An adverſary who is not more active at Paris, than he is watchful in London; and who will complete the demolition of France as well as of England, if the two countries do not combine for their common preſervation!

The deſcription of perſons to whom I have alluded as

part of the Adminiſtration, ſtill look forward with ſanguine anticipation, to imaginary Counter Revolutions in France. They want "indemnification for the paſt, and ſecurity for the future." At all events, they think that the triumph of revolt and democracy ſhould coſt as dear as poſſible, to its guilty authors. If the Miniſter is conſtitutionally ſuppoſed to make the ſpeeches from the Throne, theſe perſons may be truly ſaid to dictate the Miniſter's own ſpeeches in Parliament. They hang on his reſolutions, check his energy, and watch his conduct with jealous circumſpection. Great is the indulgence, as well as reſpect, due to his ſituation. Never was a public functionary more critically placed between external hoſtility, and internal diſſatisfaction or commotion. The ſpirit of party withholds co-operation, propoſes no meaſures of ſafety, aggravates all our calamities, blows the flame of diſcord; and, animated only by the deſire of vengeance, aids the general conflagration, in which the Miniſtry and its opponents will be alike conſumed.

But, while we ſurvey the difficulties and dangers which ſurround the Britiſh Adminiſtration, we ought not to be inſenſible to the equal and ſimilar embarraſſments in which the French rulers are placed. How can it be ſuppoſed, that after the deluge of blood which has been ſhed in France, and after the waſte of every thing except the ſoil which can be called property, the Directory will tamely ſubmit to renounce all the conqueſts of their Revolution? How are they to ſatisfy, or remunerate an inſolent and numerous army of fierce expectants, accuſtomed to military licence, and habituated to pillage? Could it be imagined that they would ever ſign a peace which left to their great political rival, any excluſive indemnification? If the republican, or regicide ſpirit of thoſe rulers has waded through carnage to the charge of the affairs of their country, are Engliſhmen to forget that patriotic zeal, and the love of glory have been not unfrequently the characteriſtic paſſion

of ſuch men? They glowed in the boſom of Cromwell, and may equally animate a Barras, or a Reubel.

What is the reſult of theſe obſervations? That the governing power of both countries is involved in almoſt inſuperable difficulties from the unfortunate iſſue of the late negotiation. That peace is at leaſt poſtponed to a diſtant, and an uncertain period: and that the calamities of war, of augmented taxation and poverty, are ranged before us. Conſiderations which eſcape common calculation, render the proſpect ſtill more alarming.

The Adminiſtration of England is committed upon the point of recovering Belgium for the Emperor, which appears to them indiſpenſable for the national ſecurity. Their expectations of peace are even connected, by their own repreſentations and avowals, with the total failure of reſource on the part of the enemy. In this fallacious ground of hope, they overlook a circumſtance of the utmoſt political importance. It is, that the very exhauſture of finance which equalizes the poverty and miſery of the French people, renders the maſs of them a neceſſary and a voluntary inſtrument, as well as an irreſiſtible one, to ſpread the conqueſts of their ambitious rulers. Gold has ever been ſubjected by ſteel. Woe to the nations, who, poſſeſſing wealth and plenty, encircle a people, impelled by hunger, deſtitute of bread, and familiar with war!

On the other hand, the rulers of France, impreſſed with the riches of England, and devouring them in idea, hold out a partition in her immenſe commercial ſpoils, as a bond of union to a coalition of allies. The Directory have even announced through the channel of an official and authorized public print, a ſyſtem of combined invaſions, as their future plan for proſecuting the war againſt Great Britain. Theſe new Sovereigns have not reflected, that if ſuch a ſyſtem could poſſibly ſucceed ſo as to convulſe the order of Government, and to ruin the public

credit of their enemy, thoſe very events would be the death-warrant of their own authority and exiſtence. No political truth is more certain, than that the power of thoſe who actually adminiſter the affairs of France, is more ſupported by the re-action of the conteſt with England, than by the attachment or veneration of their own countrymen. It is equally a fact beyond diſpute, that the public credit of Great Britain is indiſſolubly united with that degree of credit or confidence, which ſtill carries on the intercourſe of commercial life, and ſuſtains the public concerns in France.

Even if repeated invaſions were to be ſo far ſucceſsful, as to ſhake or demoliſh the preſent form of Government in this country, they could only render it more democratic and republican. They could neither conquer nor diſunite the people. But, ſuch efforts on the part of the French Adminiſtration would operate to their own individual deſtruction. From the nature of things, and the perpetual re-action in politics as in phyſics, their invaſions of England, could they be victorious, would inevitably reſtore royalty, and re-eſtabliſh monarchical deſpotiſm in France.

It is to be hoped that Europe at large, and more eſpecially the countries in queſtion, will owe to ſecondary cauſes, and even to the violence of their preſent misfortunes, thoſe ſecurities to their future peace and proſperity, which are as yet removed from our ſight. In the confidence which that hope inſpires, notwithſtanding every diſcouragement of party violence, and the unfortunate embarraſſments in which we are now plunged, every good and elevated mind will exert its faculties to advance the reſtoration of public tranquillity. Every manly mind will be ready in the hour of danger, to defend the State, indifferent to any paſt errors of its Miniſters.

After having thus freely diſcuſſed the cauſes of the failure of the late negotiation, it is not only natural, but

becoming, to ſuggeſt ſome plan, upon which, if it had been adopted, the treaty might have had a better chance of ſucceſs: or, upon which it may be again renewed with dignity, and a more favorable proſpect.

When Lord Malmſbury's miſſion was firſt announced to the public, and previous to his departure, the ſubject of the memorial which he would preſent on his immediate arrival at Paris, was diſcuſſed in a private ſociety of gentlemen. Opinions were different: it was propoſed that each ſhould, in ſupport of his own particular ideas, draw up a ſeparate memorial. The following one was brought on the enſuing day, and was written in French, as being more applicable to its object. It was read by ſeveral perſons in England, before Lord Malmſbury ſet out on his embaſſy, though it was not communicated to him. It is ſo perfectly in the ſpirit of theſe pages, that it ought not, from any miſtaken delicacy, to be withheld from the public. As a miniſterial fiction, it imagines nothing except what is highly and conſtitutionally reſpectful.

Projet de Declaration a faire a la France.

" Depuis l'epoque de l'etabliſſement de la nouvelle Conſtitution de 1793, et depuis les meſures efficaces adoptées par le Directoire, pour ſupprimer l'anarchie, et pour proteger les perſonnes et les propriétes, il ne peut raiſonablèment exiſter aucune difficulté relative a la forme de gouvernèment des deux nations; qui, l'une et l'autre, ont principalement fondé leur ſureté politique ſur la même baſe; c'eſt a dire, au moyen de taxes etablies par une repréſentation conſtitutionelle.

" C'eſt d'apres ces principes que Sa M—— Br—— tranſmit a l'Europe, par l'organe des deux Chambres du Parlèment, ſa declaration du 8 Decembre, 1795. Depuis cette epoque, juſques a ce jour, les progrès de la guerre, et les devaſtations qu'elle entraine, ont plaidé univerſellement

la cauſe de la paix. Mais la paix, pour être un bienfait permanent, doit ſe conclure, ainſi que l'experience nous l'a prouvé, d'apres des conditions juſtes, et egalement convenables aux deux partis.

" En conſequence, elle doit naturellement embraſſer les interêts de tous les differents pouvoirs, et de toutes les parties qui ont ſoufferts par la guerre ; plus particulierement encore, dans une conteſtation telle que celle-cy, ou les faits ont demontré d'une maniere plus poſitive que dans les guerres precedentes, combien la ſureté et la proſperité des individus eſt liée a celle du Governement ſous lequel ils vivent ; et combien la proſperité de tous les co-etats de l'Europe eſt liée avec la cauſe commune de la propriété, du credit public, et des droits independens des nations.

" C'eſt en qualité d'avocat de cette grande cauſe, de cette cauſe egalement intereſſante pour tous les individus ; c'eſt pour inviter la Republique Françoiſe a faire la paix, et à aſſurer aux peuples des deux nations, le bonheur qui y eſt attaché par une union auſſi complette que ſincere ; c'eſt pour l'etablir ſur les baſes les plus ſolides, que l'agent ſouſſigné, revetu des pouvoirs les plus etendus, ſe preſente maintenant au Directoire de France. Il fait cette demarche au nom de ſon Souverain, de ſa patrie, et des puiſſances alliées de l'Angleterre, pour travailler ſincerement, et d'une maniere decidée, a donner a l'Europe une paix prompte, et à regler les articles néceſſaires à la conſervation future de cette paix ; pour modifier les criſes qui ont eu lieu, et pour contre-quarrer les vues ambitieuſes et intereſſées, de quiconque voudroit tenter de la renverſer a l'avenir.

" Si ceux qui gouvernent la Republique Françoiſe, ſont diſpoſés a ecouter les propoſitions de paix avec la même ſincerité qu'elles leur ſont faites, et avec la magnanimité convenable en pareille occaſion, les difficultés ordinaires d'une négociation ne peuvent plus exiſter. La conteſtation

deviendra des-lors une rivalité genereuſe en faveur des droits de l'humanité, et ne ſera plus uniquement relative a la detention de quelques territoires nouvellement acquis, qui ajoutent peu a la force et au bonheur des empires, quand les territoires excitent la jalouſie, ou l'inimitié. Blentot apres le retour de la paix, le commerce et l'agriculture retabliront les liens d'un avantage réciproque ; et les ſommes cy-devant englouties par une guerre indefinie, ſeront a l'avenir employées a fonder et a liquider les dettes immenſes, contractées par les deux nations.

" Des fonds ſeront mis de coté pour pourvoir aisèment aux beſoins de ceux qui ont ſervi ou ſouffert pendant la guerre. L'ordre general s'etablira néceſſairement de lui même dans les finances : il liera fortement entr'eux le crèancier public, le proprietaire foncier, l'induſtrieux manufacturier : et les obligera a maintenir l'ordre interieur du gouvernement ſous lequel ils vivent, auſſi bien que la tranquillité exterieure de leur pais.

" Telle êtoit la régeneration civile et politique que la Revolution Françoiſe annonçoit dans ſes premieres déclarations. Telle eſt l'amelioration de l'ordre du ſiſteme politique de l'Europe, qu'on doit naturellement deſirer de voir ſe perfectionner, après la conteſtation qui à eu lieu, et devenir le reſultat de la guerre preſente.

" C'eſt dans toute l'etendue de l'eſprit d'un pareil ſiſteme, egalement dicté par l'etat general de Souffrance de tous les peuples, autant que pour contribuer a fixer ſur eux un bonheur permanent, que le Miniſtre ſouſſigné eſt muni et autorisé de tous les pouvoirs pour entrer dans une négociation immediate et définitive, avec les Miniſtres de la Republique Françoiſe *."

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* *Project of a Declaration to be made to France.*

" Since the era of the eſtabliſhment of the new Conſtitution of 1795, and the efficacious meaſures adopted by the Directory

If a plan of negotiation, founded upon the enlarged and conciliating principles developed in the preceding

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for the ſuppreſſion of anarchy, and for the protection of perſons and property; there cannot reaſonably exiſt any difficulty relative to the form of government of the two nations. One and the other of which have principally founded their political ſafety upon the ſame baſis; namely, by means of taxes eſtabliſhed through a conſtitutional repreſentation.

It is upon theſe principles that His Br—— M—— tranſmitted to Europe, through the medium of the two Houſes of Parliament, his declaration of the 8th December, 1795. Since that time, up to the preſent day, the progreſs of war, and the devaſtations that it produces, have pleaded univerſally in favour of peace. But, peace, in order to be a permanent benefit, ought to be concluded, as experience has demonſtrated to us, upon conditions juſt, and equally ſuited to the two parties.

Of courſe, it ought naturally to embrace the intereſts of all the different powers, and of every party, which have ſuffered by the war. More particularly ſtill in a conteſt ſuch as the preſent, where facts have proved in a more deciſive manner than in preceding wars, how much the ſecurity and proſperity of individuals is connected with that of the Government under which they live: and how much the proſperity of all the co-eſtates of Europe is connected with the common cauſe of property, public credit, and the independant rights of nations.

It is in quality of the advocate of that great cauſe, of that cauſe equally intereſting to every individual: it is to invite the French Republic to make peace, and to ſecure to the people of the two nations the felicity which is attached to it, by a union as complete as ſincere; it is to eſtabliſh it upon the moſt ſolid foundations, that the Miniſter underſigned, inveſted with the moſt extenſive powers, preſents himſelf at this time to the Directory of France. He takes this ſtep in the name of his Sovereign, of his Country, and of the powers allied with England, in order to endeavour ſincerely, and in a decided manner, to give to Europe a ſpeedy peace; and to regulate the articles neceſſary for the future preſervation of that peace. To modify the violent periods of criſis which have taken place;

ſketch of an imaginary "Declaration," had been adopted by the Engliſh Miniſtry as the baſis of peace, many of the

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and to counteract the ambitious and intereſted views of whoſoever would attempt to overturn it in future.

If thoſe who govern the French Republic, are diſpoſed to liſten to the propoſitions of peace, with the ſame ſincerity as they are now made, and with the magnanimity ſuited to ſuch an occaſion, the ordinary difficulties of a negotiation can no longer exiſt. The diſpute will from that moment become a generous emulation in favour of the rights of humanity: It will no more be excluſively relative to the detention of certain territories recently acquired, which add little to the ſtrength and happineſs of empires, when thoſe territories excite jealouſy or enmity. Quickly after the return of peace, commerce and agriculture will re-eſtabliſh the bonds of reciprocal advantage; and the ſums heretofore ſwallowed up in a war without bounds, will be in future employed to fund, and to liquidate the immenſe debts contracted by the two nations.

Funds will be ſet apart, in order to provide with eaſe for the neceſſities of thoſe who have ſerved or ſuffered during the war. General order will neceſſarily and ſpontaneouſly re-eſtabliſh itſelf in the finances. It will ſtrongly connect with each other the public creditor, the landed proprietor, and the induſtrious manufacturer. It will compel them to ſupport the interior order of the Government under which they live, as well as the exterior tranquillity of their country.

Such was the civil and political regeneration which the French Revolution announced in its firſt declarations. Such is the amelioration of the order of the political ſyſtem of Europe, which we ought naturally to wiſh to ſee brought to perfection, after the conteſt that has taken place, and become the reſult of the preſent war.

It is in all the extent of the ſpirit of ſuch a ſyſtem, dictated equally by the general and actual ſufferings of every people; as much as with a view to contribute to fix their future permanent felicity; that the Miniſter underſigned is provided and authorized with all the powers requiſite for entering into an immediate and definitive negotiation with the Miniſters of the French Republic."

inconveniencies which they have lately experienced, would probably have been avoided. A door would at the ſame time have been opened for numerous advantages, now apparently loſt. A partition in the glory of reſtoring peace to Europe, would have been held out to the French Adminiſtration: a partition as flattering to their ambition, as it muſt have been favorable to their future perſonal and political ſecurity! The realization of peace was demonſtrated to involve in it the conſolidation of the preſent Conſtitution of France; and the ſafety of thoſe in charge of all its gradations of office. Real indemnification, and ſolid tranquillity, founded on the reciprocal avowal, or on the oblivion of mutual errors, were tendered to the various parties engaged in the conteſt. But, a point of ſtill more material importance, becauſe it has hitherto formed the greateſt obſtacle to pacification, would have been obviated. I mean, the difficulties attending territorial ceſſions and reſtitutions on both ſides.

If the Directory had ventured to reject the diſcuſſion of a treaty founded upon ſuch a baſis, they would have inflicted a ſevere, if not a mortal wound, on their own authority. They would not have dared to appeal, as they have done, to the French people. At all events, our Embaſſador could not have been diſmiſſed with inſult to the Crown and Nation. Nor ſhould we have left in the poſſeſſion of the enemy an official demand of conditions, which is at preſent a powerful political inſtrument in their hands; and which they will hereafter uſe in more ways than one, to our detriment or injury.

Should theſe reflections ſtrike any member of either Houſe, they may open to his more enlarged conception, and the advantages of his ſituation, an idea of renewing the conſideration of the ſubject of peace, in Parliament. Reſolutions might be adopted upon general grounds, tending towards that object of univerſal deſire; without in any

degree trenching on the conſtitutional province of the executive Miniſters of the Crown.

Such reſolutions would produce a vaſt effect throughout Europe, while they elevated the character of the Britiſh Parliament and its deliberations. They would aid the Adminiſtration, and facilitate that union of parties, ſo ardently to be deſired, though, we may juſtly fear, ſo little to be expected. They would find their way, in ſpite of prohibitions or embargos, to the enemy. It is at Paris, not leſs than in London, that they would operate powerfully and beneficially. Perhaps, in the preſent ſtate of that country and capital, they might excite correſpondent reſolutions in France. In this expectation we are juſtified by the recent and patriotic ſpeech of Dumas, in the Aſſembly of Antients. Tranſmitted to the Arch Duke Charles, and to the Imperial Court, ſuch reſolutions would enable the one, or the other, to renew under more favourable auſpices, the overtures for a general peace. A Miniſter, with ample and conciliatory inſtructions, ſent from this Court to Switzerland, might effect the object in which Mr. Wickham, for obvious reaſons, failed. Or, couriers might prepare the way for a direct renewal of intercourſe between the two powers at war; and that completion which now appears to be ſo impracticable, might operate to its own arrangement.

Theſe are ſome of the reflections which have preſented themſelves to my mind, in the preſent awful and unexampled ſituation of public affairs. They may, if not from their own weight and ſolidity, yet from the magnitude and importance of the ſubject on which they treat, lay claim to a degree of attention. I am, nevertheleſs, well aware how weak is that claim, and how cold or ineffectual is all appeal, unleſs ſuſtained on the ſhoulders of party. We neither ſee nor hear any thing, except through the organs of party ſpirit. We are, perhaps, in conſequence of that evil genius of the times, and in defiance of exhor-

tation or example, a devoted people. We are corrupted by the wealth of which we boaſt; and forget that unanimity is as neceſſary to its protection, as it is indiſpenſable to maintain the freedom under which it was acquired. It is, however, ſome conſolation to a mind well diſpoſed, amidſt the misfortunes under which we labour, and the ſtill more awful calamities that impend, to have raiſed a warning voice, and to have pointed out a road which may conduct to honor, ſecurity, and repoſe.

Under the impreſſion of theſe ardent wiſhes, it is that I have endeavoured to examine the cauſes of the failure of the late negotiation, and to ſuggeſt meaſures for its more fortunate renewal. The criſis is come, in which retroſpect is a ſpecies of hoſtility to the common cauſe. Let us unite to repel the enemy, and then inveſtigate the pretenſions of merit.

But, I fear that the public mind is equally indifferent to exhortation or example. It is overwhelmed by inferior paſſions; and is completely poſſeſſed, not by the noble fire, but, by the deſtructive ſpirit of party: not by the generous emulation that animated the early patriotis of Greece and Rome; but, by the ſpirit that convulſed Carthage, and accelerated her fall.

Anarchy, guided and directed by France, is now aiming her dagger at the heart of our country. What has emboldened the enemy to form ſuch a deſign? Is it not becauſe he ſees us divided? Becauſe he hears that we are more occupied by mutual accuſation and recrimination, than with the ſilent exertions of union. Hence it is that we may be denominated a devoted people. Would the country reſcue herſelf from this bondage, let her mark well the conduct of her ſtateſmen! Let her eſtimate them by their ſacrifices to her extrication! Let her call upon them to unite; and diſmiſs for ever from her eſteem thoſe, who would place their own pretenſions above the ſervice of the

ſtate! Then Europe will ſee with Admiration, that public virtue as well as wiſdom are not extinct among us. While the enemy, awed by thoſe demonſtrations of union, and defeated in their pernicious projects for our deſtruction, will feel their own ſafety connected with a return to internal union and external peace.

FINIS.